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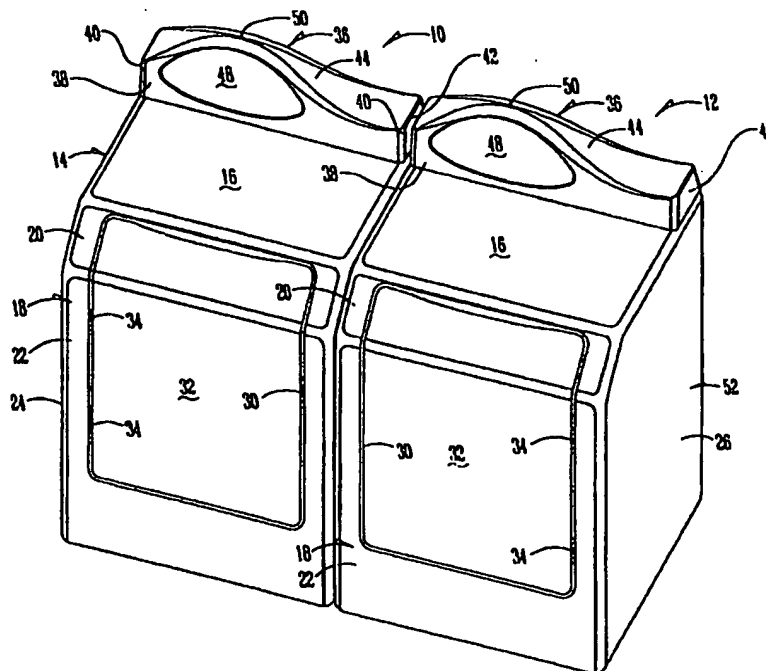
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(54) Title: REVERSIBLE APPLIANCE CABINET AND METHOD FOR USING SAME



(57) Abrégé/Abstract

An appliance cabinet includes a back panel having a convex top wall and having opposite end walls which are identical in shape to one another. This permits two appliances of the same construction to be positioned in a first position side-by-side to one another and to be moved to a second position reversed from the first position.

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REVERSIBLE APPLIANCE CABINET AND METHOD FOR USING SAME

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 An appliance cabinet includes a back panel having a convex top wall and having opposite end walls which are identical in shape to one another. This permits two appliances of the same construction to be positioned in a first position side-by-side to one another and to be moved to a second position reversed from the first position.

REVERSIBLE APPLIANCE CABINET AND METHOD FOR USING SAMEBACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a reversible appliance cabinet and method for using same.

5 On many occasions appliances are positioned in pairs in side-by-side relationship. Such an example is a washer-dryer combination wherein the washer and dryer are positioned side-by-side with respect to one another.

10 The ultimate user of a washer-dryer combination may, for personal preference, or for convenience of the particular location in which the appliances are used, want to reverse the left and right positions of the washer-dryer.

15 Therefore a primary object of the present invention is the provision of a reversible appliance cabinet which includes a back panel having a curved top wall and which is reversible when placed in side-by-side relation with a similar appliance.

20 A further object of the present invention is the provision of a side-by-side washer-dryer combination wherein the back panels of the washer and dryer include top walls that are curved and combine to provide a smooth continuous singular surface.

25 A further object of the present invention is the provision of an improved washer-dryer combination wherein the top walls of the back panels combine to provide a smooth continuous single surface regardless of whether or not the side-by-side positions of the washer-dryer set are reversed.

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A further object of the present invention is the provision of an improved reversible appliance cabinet

and method for using the same which are efficient in operation, which provide an attractive appearance, and which are economical to manufacture.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 The foregoing objects may be achieved by an appliance having an appliance cabinet including a top wall, left and right side walls, and a front wall. One of the top and front walls includes a door opening therein. A door is mounted to the appliance for hinged
10 movement from a closed position in covering relation over the door opening to an open position exposing the door opening for access to the interior of the appliance cabinet.

15 A back panel is mounted on the top wall of the cabinet. The back panel includes a back panel front wall, a back panel rear wall, a back panel left side wall, a back panel right side wall, and a back panel top wall. The back panel top wall includes a convex curved surface facing upwardly and the back panel left
20 and right side walls are identical in shape and size with respect to one another.

 According to one feature of the invention the back panel top wall includes opposite top wall ends and a top wall center located midway between the top wall
25 ends. The convex curved surface of the back panel top wall is positioned off-center with respect to the top wall center.

 According to another feature of the invention the back panel left and right side walls lie in
30 approximately the same vertical planes as the appliance left and right side walls respectively.

According to another feature of the invention, two appliances of the above construction are positioned in a first side-by-side position wherein the right panel end wall of the first appliance faces and registers with the left panel end wall of the second appliance. The first and second appliances are movable to a second side-by-side position reversed from the first side-by-side position and wherein the left panel end wall of the first appliance faces and registers with the right panel end wall of the second appliance.

A method of the present invention comprises positioning first and second appliances in their first side-by-side position and then reversing the positions of the first and second appliances to their second side-by-side position. In the second side-by-side position the top panel walls of the first and second back panels combine to form a substantially smooth continuous surface.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a washer and dryer positioned in their first side-by-side position.

Figure 2 is a view similar to Figure 1, but showing the washer and dryer in a reversed side-by-side position from that shown in Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a side elevational view taken from the left side of Figure 1.

Figure 4 is a side elevational view of the right side of the washing machine 10 of Figure 1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to Figure 1 a washing machine 10 and a dryer 12 are shown in a first side-by-side position.

Washing machine 10 includes a washing machine cabinet 14 having a top wall 16 and a front wall 18. Front wall 18 includes an angled portion 20 and a vertical portion 22. The angled portion 20 may be part of either the top wall 16 or the front wall 18, but for purposes of reference the angled portion 20 is referred to as part of the front wall 18. Washing machine cabinet 14 also includes a left side wall 24 (Figure 3) and a right side wall 26 (Figure 4), as well as a back wall 28. Within front wall 18 is a door opening 30 and a door 32 is hinged over the door opening 30 for hinged movement about hinges 34 which are on the left-hand side of the door opening 30. The door opening may be positioned in any of a number of positions in the cabinet without detracting from the invention. For example, it could be part of the top wall instead of part of the front wall, or it could overlap portions of both the top and front walls.

Attached to the top wall 16 and extending upwardly therefrom is a back panel 36. Back panel 36 includes a front wall 38, a left end wall 40, a right end wall 42, a top wall 44 and a back wall 46. Embedded within the front wall 38 is an oval control panel 48.

Top wall 44 of back panel 36 includes a convex surface extending upwardly and having its highest point located at the numeral 50. Top wall 44 of back panel 36 also has a first width adjacent the left and right end walls 40, 42 and a second width adjacent the top point 50 which is less than the first distance. In other words the top wall 44 of back panel 36 tapers inwardly so as to have a thinner portion intermediate the opposite ends thereof. The highest point 50 of the convex surface is shown positioned off-center from the

mid-point between the left and right end walls 40, 42. However, this highest point may be positioned anywhere along the length of the top wall 44.

5 Dryer 12 is substantially identical in
configuration to washing machine 10, and corresponding
numerals are used to identify similar parts. However,
it should be noted that hinges 34 are positioned on the
right-hand side of the door 32 whereas the hinges 34
are positioned on the left-hand side of the door 32 in
10 washing machine 10.

Referring to Figure 2, the washer 10 and the dryer
12 are shown in a reversed position from that shown in
Figure 1. In Figure 1 the washer 10 is to the left of
the dryer 12, but in Figure 2 the washer 10 is
15 positioned to the right of dryer 12. However, as can
be seen by comparison of Figure 1 and Figure 2, the two
top walls 44 of the back panels 36 combine to form a
single continuous curved surface in both the position
shown in Figure 1 and the reversed position shown in
20 Figure 2. This is possible because the end walls 40,
42 of both the back panels in appliances 10 and 12 are
identical in shape and size. In Figure 1, the right
end wall 42 of the appliance 10 is facing and
registered with the left end wall 40 of the appliance
25 12. In Figure 2 with the washer and dryer reversed,
the right-hand end wall 42 of back panel 36 in the
dryer 12 is positioned adjacent and registered with the
left end wall 40 of the washing machine 10. This is
possible because all the end panels 40, 42 of both of
30 the appliances 10, 12 are identical in shape and size.
Similarly the opposite ends of the top wall 44 are
identical in width to one another in both of the
appliances 10, 12. Thus the two top walls 44 easily

combine to form a smooth single continuous surface in both the position of the appliances shown in Figure 1 and the position of the appliances shown in Figure 2.

5 In the drawings and specification there has been set forth a preferred embodiment of the invention, and although specific terms are employed, these are used in a generic and descriptive sense only and not for purposes of limitation. Changes in the form and the proportion of parts as well as in the substitution of
10 equivalents are contemplated as circumstances may suggest or render expedient without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention as further defined in the following claims.

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. In combination:
a first appliance;
a second appliance;
said first and second appliance having first and second
5 back panels respectively mounted thereon;
said first and second back panels both having left and
right panel end walls of identical shape and size;
said first and second appliances being positioned in a
first side-by-side position wherein said right
10 panel end wall of said first appliance faces and
registers with said left panel end wall of said
second appliance; and
said first and second appliances being movable to a
second side-by-side position reversed from said
15 first side-by-side position and wherein said left
panel end wall of said first appliance faces and
registers with said right panel end wall of said
second appliance.
2. A combination according to claim 1 wherein said
first appliance is a fabric washing machine, and said
second appliance is a fabric drying machine.
3. A combination according to claim 2 wherein the
outside surfaces of said first and second back panels
have identical shape and size.
4. A combination according to claim 3 wherein said
outside surface each include an upwardly extending

convex surface and wherein said upwardly extending convex surface of each of said back panels is off-center between said left and right end panel walls thereof.

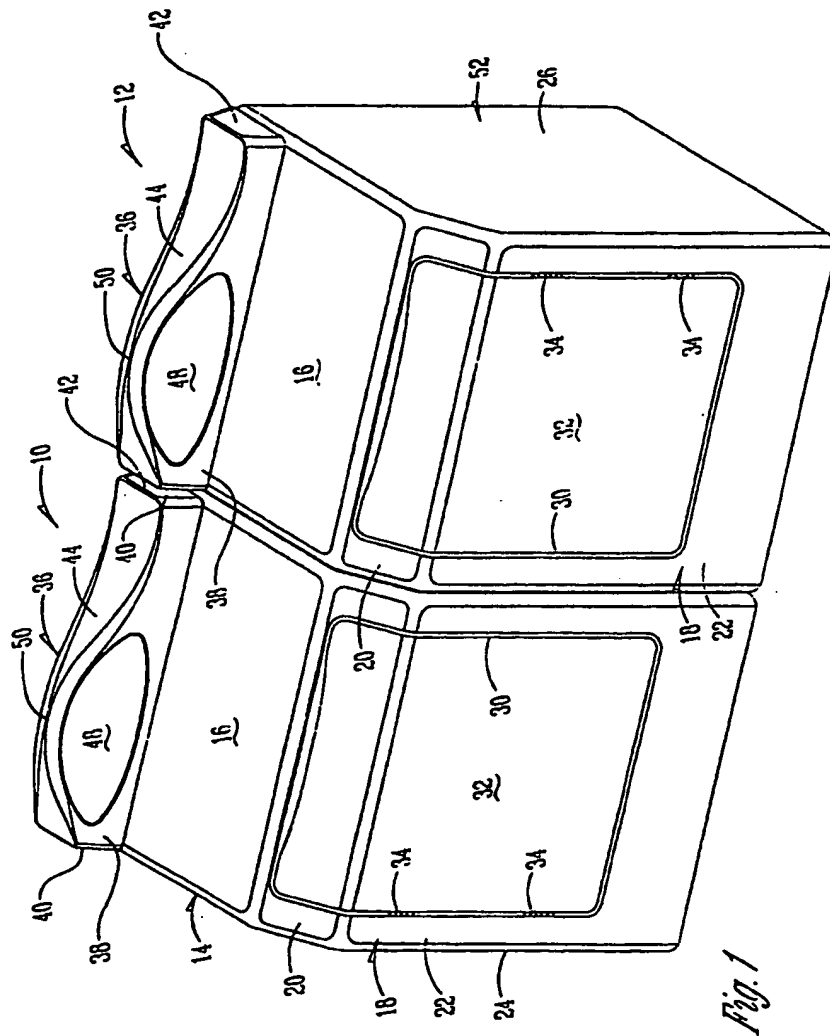
5. A combination according to claim 1 wherein each of said back panels includes a curved top panel wall and wherein each of said curved top panel walls includes front and rear edges and left and right ends, said
5 front and rear edges being spaced apart a first distance adjacent said left and right ends and being spaced apart a second distance less than said first distance between said left and right ends.

6. An appliance comprising:
an appliance cabinet comprising a top wall, left and right side walls, and a front wall, one of said top and front walls having a door opening therein;
5 a door mounted to said appliance cabinet for hinged movement from a closed position in covering relation over said door opening to an open position exposing said door opening for access to the interior of said appliance cabinet;
10 a back panel mounted on said top wall of said cabinet, said back panel comprising a back panel front wall, a back panel rear wall, a back panel left side wall, a back panel right side wall, and a back panel top wall;
15 said back panel top wall having a convex curved surface facing upwardly;
said back panel left side wall being identical in shape and size to said back panel right side wall.

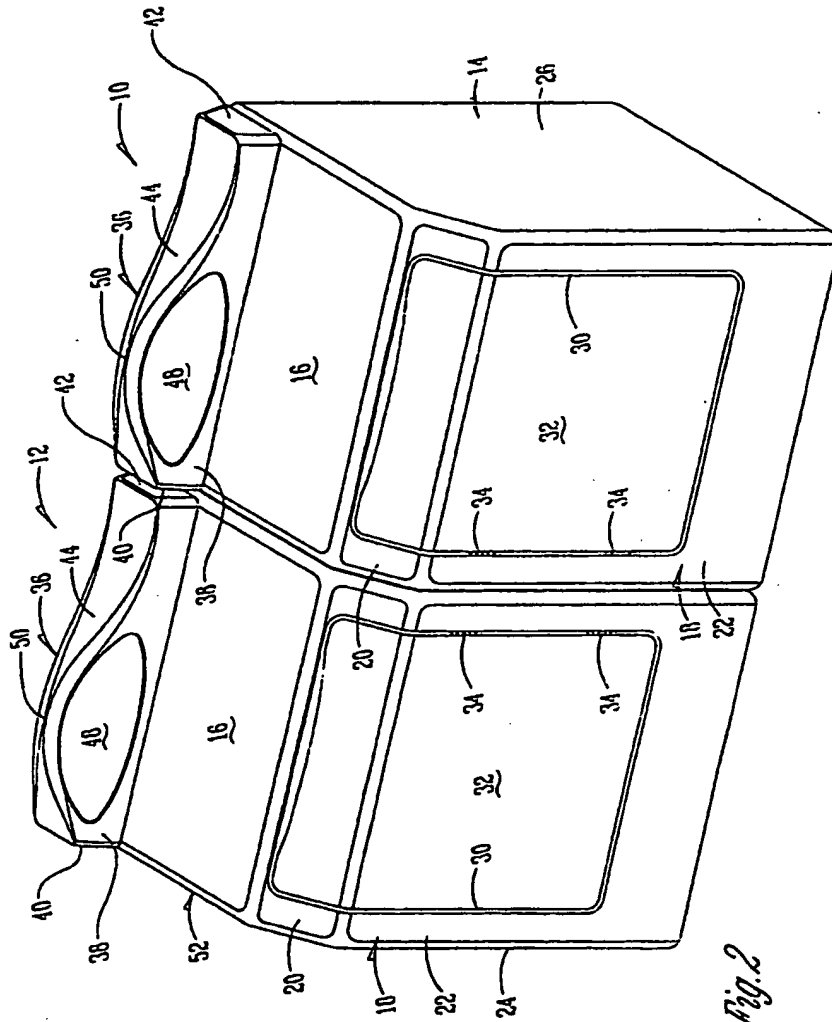
7. An appliance according to claim 6 wherein said back panel top wall includes opposite top wall ends and a top wall center located midway between said top wall ends, said convex curved surface of said back panel top wall being positioned off-center with respect to said top wall center.
8. An appliance according to claim 7 wherein said back panel left and right side walls lie in approximately the same vertical planes as said appliance cabinet left and right side walls, respectively.
9. An appliance according to claim 8 wherein said appliance is a fabric washing machine.
10. An appliance according to claim 8 wherein said appliance is a fabric dryer.
11. A combination according to claim 6 wherein said curved top panel wall includes front and rear edges and left and right ends, said front and rear edges being spaced a first distance apart adjacent said left and right ends and being spaced a second distance less than said first distance apart between said left and right ends.
12. A method for positioning a first appliance relative to a second appliance, said first and second appliances having first and second back panels respectively mounted thereon; said first and second back panels each having opposite left and right panel end walls and a curved top panel wall extending

therebetween, said curved top panel wall having an upwardly extending convex portion; said left and right panel end walls of both of said first and second back panels having identical shape and size; said method comprising:

5 positioning said first and second appliances in a first side-by-side position wherein said right panel end wall of said first appliance faces and registers with said left panel end wall of said second
10 appliance and said curved top panel walls of said first and second back panels combine to form a first substantially smooth continuous single surface; and
reversing the positions of said first and second
15 appliances to a second side-by-side position wherein said left panel end wall of said first appliance faces and registers with said right panel end wall of said second appliance whereby
said top panel walls of said first and second back
20 panels combine to form a second substantially smooth continuous single surface in both said first and second side-by-side positions.



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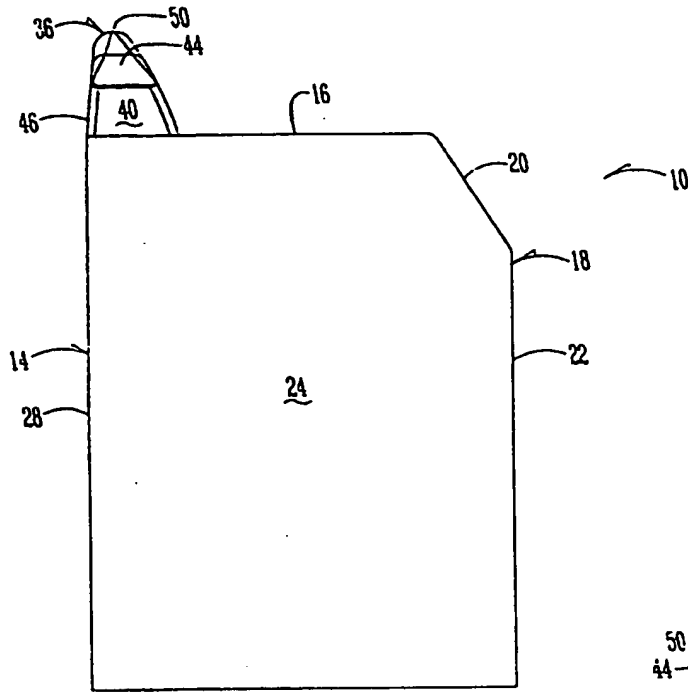


Fig. 3

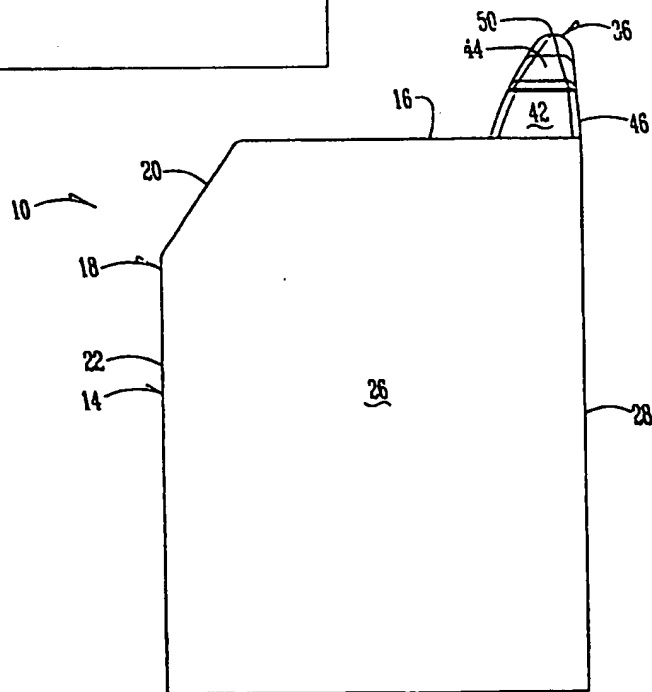


Fig. 4

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